

LOCAL NEWS

Avivo Village works to provide shelter for unhoused communities

The nonprofit says solving the issue of homelessness will take multiple approaches.



Author: Deevon Rahming (KARE11)

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MINNEAPOLIS — In the wake of mass encampment sweeps in Minneapolis, there's a safe space for the unsheltered amid the chaos.

"Our goal is to end homelessness, and watching people lose their belongings and needing to move from place to place is very challenging when we are trying to stay in touch with them and help them access services and housing," said Emily Bastian.

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Bastian is a vice president with [Avivo Village](#) in Minneapolis, working to house 100 people in individual rooms equipped with everything from a twin bed to Narcan, in an effort to provide shelter and save lives.

"We have people from age 18 up to their 70s, our goal is that people leave here into housing," said Bastian.

Eleven people from the encampment outside city hall moved into the village Tuesday after making contact with members of Avivo's street outreach teams, led by Justin Labeaux.

"Passing out supplies whether it be tents, tarps, harm reduction supplies," said Labeaux. He went on to say, "It really starts with just building rapport and building trust."

A trust which Bastian says isn't always easy to come by when many feel more at ease in an encampment.

"I want to be able to come and go 24/7, you can why can't I? My pets are my family and I shouldn't need to choose between them and shelter, why just because I'm unhoused do people think that they have control over that," said Bastian of some of those they encounter.

In order to combat the issue of homelessness, Bastian says it will take several approaches.

"With more funding, we could shelter more people and house more people, if people had their needs met, there would be less crime," explained Bastian.

The team at Avivo will celebrate a milestone on Thursday having placed more than 100 people in permanent housing since they opened in December 2020.

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